



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Spring Comes to Phase 1 in Chelmsford and Westford

Look for a spruced up trail as both towns plan a general cleanup in this, the BFRT's first spring.

Funding for creating a parking lot at Sunny Meadow Farm, near Robin Hill Road, has been recommended by the Chelmsford Community Preservation Committee. Pending approval by Town Meeting, this lot will provide parking for both BFRT users and community gardeners. The Town would also use a 50-foot strip of land on which it has an easement to build a connecting path from the parking lot to the rail trail.



Folks using all manner of biped locomotion take advantage of the trail on a warm early spring day.

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) is currently working on formulating rules for trail use and is also looking into adding amenities such as porta-potties, kiosks, benches, and bike racks.

In Westford, creating a parking lot remains a future project. However, locations for bench installations near street crossings are being explored.

As an example of Chelmsford's commitment to increasing opportunities for bicyclists, builders of new construction abutting the rail trail at 9 North Road have been required to include bike racks in their plans. They have also been asked to include a bike/pedestrian path from the parking lot at Old Town Hall to their property, facilitating access to the property from the rail trail.

Westford, Acton and Carlisle All Support Phase 2A Final Design

Late last year the BFRT got the wonderful official notification that it had been awarded \$500,000 from the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program for the final Phase 2A design. Final design includes the stages of 75% design, 100% design, PS&E (Plans, Specifications, and Estimates), as well as any design alterations during construction. In other words, the trail will be ready for construction when the final design has been completed.

This 4.88 miles of Phase 2A is very complicated: six water crossings, one at-grade crossing of Rt. 225, two at-grade crossings of Rt. 27, one "fly over" crossing at Rt. 2A (a bridge), and three other at-grade road crossings. Thus GPI, the firm that performed the 25% design for Phase 2A, estimated the cost to finalize design to be almost \$770,000, leaving a shortfall of \$270,000.

Since Phase 2A goes from north to south through Westford, Carlisle, and Acton, all three towns needed to provide additional funds to cover their portion of the design costs. That amounted to approximately \$15,000 for Westford, \$5,000 for Carlisle, and almost \$250,000 for Acton. (Note, the Westford and Carlisle sections are each about 0.25 mile in length, but while the Carlisle portion is a straight shot through the woods, the Westford portion includes the Rt. 225 crossing, and thus is much more expensive to design.)

Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding was approved by all three towns to pay for the 25% design, and this spring all three towns applied for additional CPA funding to help pay for the cost of the final design. Since Acton had about \$185,000 left from previously allocated funds for the trail, CPA funds were requested for the remaining \$65,000. Acton enlarged its CPA request to \$115,000 to include \$50,000 for set-aside for potential right-of-way expenses.

Westford unanimously voted the \$15,000 of CPA funds for the final design at its March Town Meeting. At its April Town Meeting Acton followed suit with a nearly unanimous vote for \$115,000 of CPA funds for its final design and right-of-way costs. Carlisle's \$5,000 request has been approved by the town's Community Preservation Committee, and its Town Meeting will vote on the request in May.

Thus it appears that full funding for the completion of Phase 2A design will be secured. The next step is finalization of negotiations with GPI on terms and conditions (or if that is unsatisfactory, opening bidding for the final design contract). After the design contract is signed, the 75% design is expected to be completed in about 12 months.

This is great progress for Phase 2A, even though the process has seemed painfully slow. Completion of the design will allow us to credibly and strongly advocate for Phase 2A construction to commence in the next couple of years rather than 2021-2025 as specified in the current Transportation Plan.

Advisory Committee Studies West Concord Crossing

The portion of the rail trail being planned by the Town of Concord, known as Phase 2C, extends from Commonwealth Avenue, near the prison, south to the Sudbury Town line. The section of the trail just north of this, which includes a crossing of Rt. 2, and extends to the Acton Town line, known as Phase 2B, is being planned by the state in conjunction with the Rt. 2 Rotary redesign project. Phase 2B is in the 25% design stage.

After Concord's 2008 Town Meeting approved the 25% design of Phase 2C, it was submitted to Mass Highway for review. However, the actual route of the trail through the West Concord Village Center and the crossing of the active MBTA commuter rail line had not been determined.

Previously, the Town had asked the MBTA for permission to route the BFRT through the MBTA parking lot and cross the MBTA rail line at the existing commuter pedestrian crossing. However, the MBTA denied this request.

In order to fully explore all options for routing the trail, the Town hired a consultant to evaluate seven other alternatives for crossing the active MBTA rail line. Each alternative was evaluated on such criteria as aesthetics, safety, cost, and impacts on the community and local businesses. The Alternatives Analysis report is available via a link on the BFRTAC page of the Concord website (www.concordma.gov). Meetings were held with community and business groups to present the various alternatives and to elicit feedback. The Advisory Committee expects to make its recommendation on the route this spring.

Farewell Retiring Board Members

Many thanks to Beth Logan, Chelmsford, and Susan Haney, Framingham, for their contributions to the Friends Board of Directors. We will miss you but look forward to seeing you at Friends' events.

Sudbury Town Meeting Approves Funding To Buy CSX Rail Corridor

Sudbury's April Town Meeting voted overwhelmingly to allow the previously approved amount of \$420,000 for the acquisition of the unused CSX railroad corridor in Sudbury to be paid out of available funds rather than by bonding. When added to other town funds, the total will cover the acquisition of the unused CSX railroad corridor from near Rt. 20 to the Framingham line. When the purchase is complete (May target date), the entire BFRT corridor in Sudbury will be publicly owned.

Another Town Meeting article would have reduced the Sudbury CPA surcharge from 3% to 1.25%. Such a reduction would have compromised future funds for projects such as the rail trail. The article was defeated.

A committee of Town staff, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, has been working to create a concept of the trail in Sudbury. Town Meeting approved a non-binding resolution to direct the committee to include the possibility of a shared-use path that does not utilize the rail bed in sections where mitigation to avoid harm to wetlands and/or wildlife may be difficult.

Framingham Friends Meeting Well Attended

The March meeting of the Friends, held in Framingham, was very well attended, attracting over 60 people to hear presentations on various aspects of the BFRT in Framingham. This portion of the trail abuts over a hundred residential homes, the Garden in the Woods, as well as a school and a shopping center.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform the Framingham community of the progress of the trail so far, build public support for the trail among abutters and other residents of the town and encourage the Board of Selectmen to take the action necessary to help insure that the trail will be completed all the way to Rt. 9 in Framingham.

Board members Emily Teller and Dick Williamson led off with presentations about the history of the BFRT and a visual tour of the 6.8-mile portion that has been completed in Westford and Chelmsford.



There were also presentations to reaffirm the enormous value to a community such trails offer. Dr. Tom Treadwell, of the MetroWest Medical Center focused on health, and Peter Henry, owner of Landry's Bicycles, explained the potential economic benefits. Two transportation planners, Kathy Buckley and Karl Quackenbush, from State's Central Transportation Planning Office discussed how the connectivity of rail trails can create a meaningful alternative to the transportation infrastructure of the Commonwealth.

The Board of Selectmen, through the Town Manager, Julian Suso, announced at the meeting that the town's appraisal of the portion of the right of way (ROW) owned by CSX in Framingham has been completed. The Town is now in the process of setting up discussions with CSX to determine the various options available to place this ROW in Framingham in the Public Domain. Mr. Suso assured us that "...the beginning is over..." and we are on our way.

The meeting was well received, and there were several volunteers to join John Stasik in setting up a Framingham Task Force within the BFRT that would work to engage the community in the trail, build community support for its completion, and monitor and communicate progress to the wider community and the Friends.

ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS!

Don't miss the 2-minute "tour" of the BFRT in Chelmsford by Larry Prentice Photography and the short bike cam tour of Phase 1 by Stephen Mayotte. Find them using this link to the BFRT website:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/videos

Upcoming Community Events & Volunteer Opportunities

May

1st - Concord Earth Day - parade and table

1st - Concord: Minute Man ARC MARCH - marshalling

June

12th - Lowell River Fest - table

26th - Carlisle Old Home Day

July

3rd & 4th - Chelmsford Country Fair - booth

4th - Sudbury Fourth of July Parade

4th - Concord Picnic In the Park

Summer

Mondays - Sudbury Summer Concerts

Fridays - Framingham Concerts on the Green

We hope you will join and/or help us out at one or more of these local events this summer. Consider giving an hour to staff an event table in your town or walk in a local parade to spread the news of the continuing progress - town by town - of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

See www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/help_bfrr/volunteer.html for up-to-date volunteer opportunities. Or contact your town's representative listed at the bottom of this page.

Bedford To Design Minuteman Bikeway Extension

At its annual Town Meeting Bedford voted \$210,000 to design a paved 2-mile extension to the Minuteman Bikeway. It will create a link from the current terminus in Bedford to Rt. 62 (Concord Road). After over 3 hours (over two nights) of discussion and debate, the article for a paved surface passed with a 65% majority. The Selectmen, Planning Board, and Finance, Transportation, and Bike Committee had all voted to support the paved option.

Although the popular Minuteman Bikeway will not have a direct connection to the BFRT, extending the Bikeway will create more opportunities for trail users.

Annual Summer Solstice Bike Ride

June 21, 6:00 pm
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Old Town Hall, Chelmsford Center

Note, after the bike ride we will retire to a local to-be-determined watering hole at ~8:15 pm. You don't have to participate in the bike ride to participate in the post-activity socializing.

Donations to Amenities Funds

Funds have been established to help pay for amenities along completed portions of the rail trail. People wishing to donate may specify that their contributions be used in Chelmsford only, Westford only, for a specific project, or anywhere on the trail. Mail contributions for amenities to: FBFRT, PO Box 1192, Concord, MA 01742. Please include your name, address, email, phone number, whether your donation is for the amenities general fund or a specific town and if you wish to remain anonymous.

If you have ideas for projects that you would like to have considered, please email the Friends of BFRT at chelmsford-amenities@brucefreemanrailtrail.org for Chelmsford or westford-amenities@brucefreemanrailtrail.org for Westford.

For more information about amenities, please visit www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org/amenities.



Although winter seems a distant memory, we felt we would be remiss if we did not exhibit the beauty of the snow covered trail. Keep those x-country skis waxed for next season!

For Further Information:

Visit: www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Call or Email:

Acton:	Tom Michelman	978-580-6190	tmichelman@comcast.net
Carlisle:	Alan Cameron	978-369-2223	alancameron@comcast.net
Chelmsford:	Cynthia McLain	781-981-3943	cynthia.mclain@comcast.net
Concord:	Barbara Pike	978-369-0437	bbpike@aol.com
Framingham:	John Stasik	508-877-6771	jstasik@rcn.com
Lowell:	Sharon Galpin	978-446-8906	sgalpin99@gmail.com
Sudbury:	Dick Williamson	978-618-5475	williamson@ll.mit.edu
Westford:	Emily Teller	978-692-6968	eteller@earthlink.net

Attend: Monthly Friends meetings

Send Email: info@brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Newsletter Photo Credits:

Emily Teller, Bill Williamson

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Show your support by joining today!

Members will receive newsletters, notices of upcoming trail-related events, and opportunities to actively promote the rail trail through a variety of volunteer activities.

The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conductor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> RR Tycoon \$500+ |

*Sponsor and above receive complimentary BFRT cap or T-shirt.

First Name

Last Name

Contact Name

Address 1 (Street Address, P.O. Box, company name, c/o)

Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

City

State

Zip

Daytime Phone

Evening Phone

Email address

YES NO

I would like to receive the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail newsletter.

☐ ☐

Send my newsletter via email (include email address to the left).

☐ ☐

Send via postal mail.

☐ ☐

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

☐ ☐

I would like to volunteer.

☐ ☐

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

☐ ☐

I am a trail abutter.

☐ ☐

I authorize the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to use my name for promotional efforts to support the trail.

☐ ☐

Gift: ☐ Cap ☐ T-Shirt (S / M / L / XL) ☐ No Thanks

Please enclose a check payable to Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and mail this form to:

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
PO Box 1192
Concord, MA 01742

You may also join on-line at www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org

FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL



SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER